

The Initiative

Northwest Georgia has the fastest growing urban population in the state outside of the Atlanta metropolitan region. Recognizing that this rapid rate of growth could affect the quality of life and economic development in the region, the Region One Advisory Council (RAC) has identified growth management as one of the three main issues facing the region. To help address this issue, the RAC has established the Northwest Georgia Growth Management Initiative.

Northwest Georgia is one of twelve service delivery regions established by the General Assembly in 1998. The RAC is a 21-member group of public and private sector leaders from the region. The RAC provides a forum for communication between the region and state government and facilitates the coordinated delivery of community and economic development services.

The objective of the Northwest Georgia Growth Management Initiative (Initiative) is to develop a common regional vision and strategy for managing growth and change which can be embraced by business, local government and residents throughout the region and integrated into their own decision-making processes. The Initiative provides a forum for raising awareness about the need for managing growth and change. Growth management can be a positive force for guiding community change and development. It is not a “zoning or no zoning” issue or a means to restrict growth.

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Taking steps to more actively manage the changes that are occurring will help protect the region’s quality of life

With your Help

Northwest Georgia is changing. Development is occurring in all parts of the region. With your help, we can identify ways to help the region continue to grow without jeopardizing important regional and community characteristics.

By addressing growth regionally, we recognize that the impacts of development do not stop at the city or county line. Our natural resources are not confined to a single jurisdiction. A regional approach also provides an opportunity for sharing resources and increasing the cost- effectiveness of services, thus accomplishing more together than can be done separately.

Everyone has a role in guiding the change and development occurring in our communities. Together we can build a better region and preserve our land and our resources.

Growth management can be a positive force for guiding community change and development.

Together, we can build a better region and preserve our land and our resources



Please contact your regional representative at
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or
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This brochure was designed and printed with the assistance of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Challenge

The challenge is managing the growth and change that is occurring in a manner that maintains and enhances the quality of life in the region. Taking steps to more actively manage the changes that are occurring will help protect the region’s character and environmental and scenic assets – and, most importantly, the quality of life we enjoy so much. Together we can recognize the linkage between development, the environment, and social and economic conditions of everyday life and promote a balance of local, regional, public and private interests.

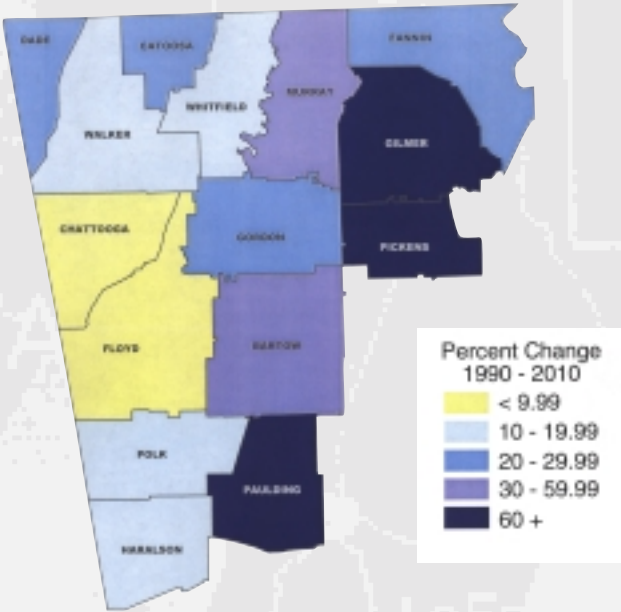
- To help the region meet these challenges, the Initiative is:
- Identifying future development trends;
 - Defining options for desirable forms of development;
 - Working toward continuity and collaboration in development activities within the region; and
 - Encouraging the adoption of policies, programs, incentives and regulations to achieve desired forms of development.

Land of Legend,
People of Vision

Identifying growth trends in northwest Georgia

Population

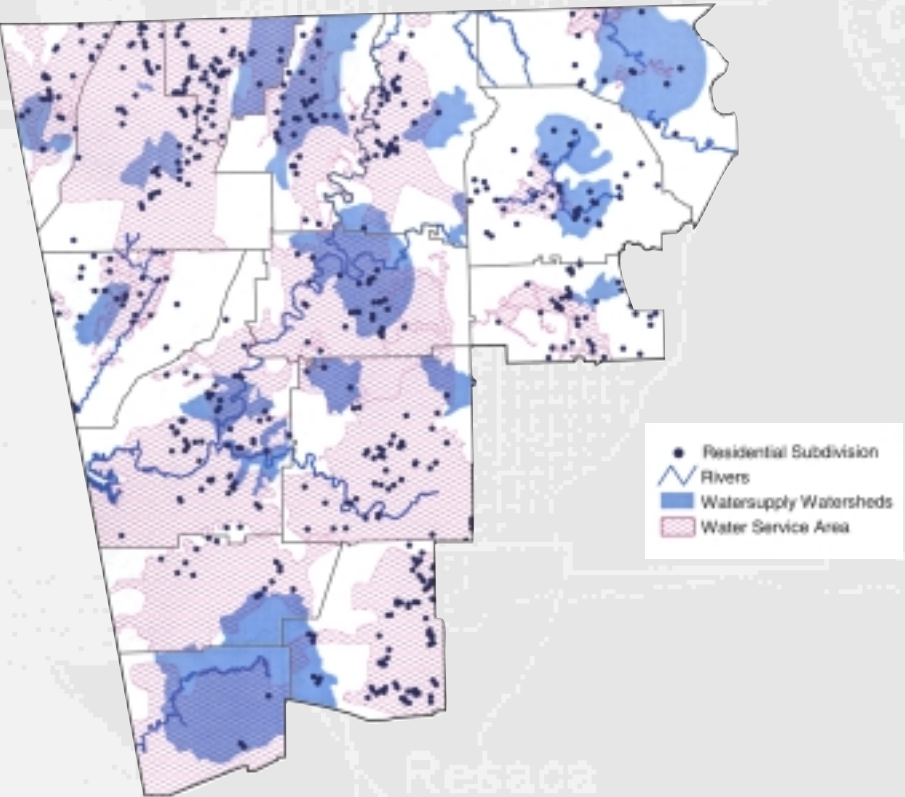
From 1980 to 1996, northwest Georgia grew in population by an estimated 16.5% to a total of 622,856. And the region continues to grow. The population of the region is expected to double over the next twenty years. All of the 15 counties in the region are expected to have growth rates of 10% or higher over the next five years. 89% of the population increase that has occurred since 1970 is from people moving into the region. Employment in the region is projected to increase by 52% over the next 20 years.



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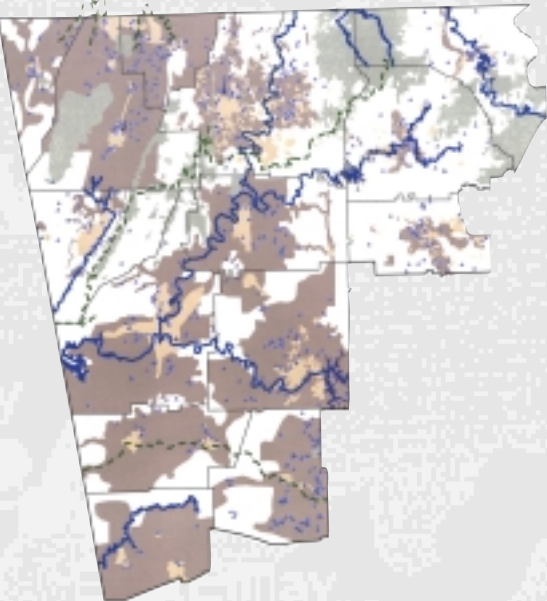
Infrastructure

The counties and cities in the region are served by 35 separate public water providers. According to the 1990 Census, 80% of the region's residents are served by public and private water providers while the remaining 20% are served by individual wells. The North Georgia and Coosa Valley RDCs have determined that these providers will not have adequate treatment capacity and/or sources of water to meet projected demand over the next twenty years. Only 34% of the region's housing units are serviced with public sewer while 66% are serviced by septic tanks or cesspools. The limited capacity of water and sewer services could significantly impact the region's ability to grow and diversify its economic base.



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...current patterns of development could lead to the loss of agricultural and timber lands...



Approximately 68% of the land acreage in the region is classified as timber land. Only 10% is protected as open space. The rich diversity of natural resources in the region provides numerous unique recreational and economic opportunities. As development occurs, the threat to these resources increases. Continuation of the current patterns of development could lead to the loss of agricultural and timber lands, scenic areas, and other rural characteristics, as well as degradation of sensitive environmental resources.

Natural Resources

Traffic

With population expected to double, and jobs only expected to increase by 52% over the next twenty years, it is likely that the region will see a significant amount of "bedroom community" type development and high commuting patterns. The traffic effects of this increase in development are being seen throughout the region. In addition, while only one of the counties is currently in an air quality non-attainment area, the continued increase in traffic congestion could impact air quality. This could potentially lead to additional areas of the region being added to the air quality non-attainment status.



...continued increase in traffic congestion could impact air quality

Existing land use regulations do not establish means or incentives to prevent the prevailing pattern of low-density sprawl



Because this area is an attractive place to live and is accessible to three major metropolitan areas, a significant amount of development is occurring in the region. It is estimated that 17% of the land in the region is currently developed, with 40% of the land projected to be developed within 20 years. Yet, many of the existing land use regulations do not establish means or incentives to prevent the prevailing pattern of low-density sprawl.

Development



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